

## ORPHA'S REGRET

A STORY OF THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES IN ISRAEL

By the "Highway and Byway" Preacher

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Scripture authority:—Ruth 1:1-15, especially verses 14 and 15.

### SERMONETTE.

A Choice That Determined a Destiny.—Orpha on the road that led to the land of Israel came face to face with the turning point of her life. The vision had come to her of a new home and a place among God's people and obedient to the aspirations for a better life and holier things, she started with her mother-in-law, Naomi, and sister-in-law, Ruth, for the Promised Land. Perhaps she and Ruth during the sad days of their widowhood had talked over together their plans. While their hearts were bleeding and tender there had come a yearning to know the God whom their husbands had known, and served, and with it had come the resolve that they would cleave unto the mother-in-law, Naomi, as the one who could guide their feet into the way and blessing of God.

So they had gone forth with Naomi and had come to the borderland of Israel. There Naomi paused and wisely tested the sincerity of purpose of the two young women. They must count the cost. It was no light thing to choose God and God's people as a future destiny. They must realize that it meant separation from the old life and hardships in the new. In substance, Naomi said to Ruth and Orpha what Jesus said to those who would become his disciples. "Which of you," he exclaimed, after he had declared that discipleship meant cross-bearing and fellowship in hardship and suffering, "intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it. Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and he is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying: This man began to build, and was not able to finish."

And Orpha hid her mother-in-law a fearful adieu and turned back. Turned back from the light of which she had caught a glimmering. Turned back from the higher purpose and destiny. Quenched the flickering flame of spiritual aspirations, and turned back to the old life and the old gods. Turned back to be swallowed up by the world and the things of the world. This is the last word we ever hear of Orpha. From that time forth she was counted out of God's reckoning. We can imagine what her life may have been after her return, and how when the tidings came of the blessing and prosperity which had come to Ruth in the, to her, strange, far-off land of Israel, there must have come the smartings of disappointment and regret that she had once been so near the blessing and had thoughtlessly and carelessly let the treasure slip from her. "For of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: 'It might have been!'"

Orpha and Ruth stood side by side that day at the dividing line between the world and God. Orpha turned back, there ends the tale. Ruth went on, and today we are rejoicing in the Christ who was of the house and lineage of David, whose grandfather Obed was the son of Ruth and Boaz.

### THE STORY.

BY DINT of coaxing and petting Orpha's friends had at last persuaded her to accompany them to the festivities in the village close at hand, where for weeks the preparations had been going on for the honoring of the gods of the Moabites, and she was busy getting ready for the start in the early morning. It seemed strange to them to have to coax Orpha to go, for in former years she had been one of the gayest at such celebrations, and they had expected, now that the influence of her mother-in-law, Naomi, was no longer present, that she would enter again heartily into the life and customs of her people.

On her return to her old home, after the departure of Ruth and Naomi her parents and friends had welcomed her right royally, secretly rejoicing that she was no longer to be dominated by the Israelitish woman who had come into their midst years before and who had firmly and steadfastly refused to share in their idolatrous feasts and practices, and the feelings of jealousy and resentment which were felt at the time of her marriage to the promising young Hebrew, Chilion, were forgotten in the realization that she was once more one of them.

But to Orpha something in the old life was lacking. She could not explain why. She did not understand, except that in the old home and with the old friends there was something lacking, and a sense of disappointment came to her. She tried to forget it, and enter into the activities of the

home circle and friends with the old-time pleasure and vivacity, but she could not forget the quiet, helpful, uplifting influence of Naomi. Unconsciously she was constantly drawing comparisons between the life she had known after becoming the wife of Chilion, and the life her people lived. When the time drew near for the festivities attending the worship of their gods she had felt the old thrill of expectant pleasure which she used to know as she had planned and prepared to share in the celebrations. But this feeling soon passed and left her with that sense of unrest and dissatisfaction, so that at last, much to the surprise of her friends, she decided that she would not go to the festivities. It was then that they besieged her with their pleadings until at last she consented to go.

"What is the matter with me anyway?" she exclaimed, irritated as she busied herself with the preparations. "Why shouldn't I go, and why shouldn't I have a good time? Why should I feel as I do?" But even while she impatiently argued with herself there kept recurring to her mind the memory of her mother-in-law's words, as repeatedly she had heard her say, when asked to attend the feasts: "No, I have left my own land, but I did not leave my God behind, and I could not go up to the services that would do honor to those which are no gods at all."

She had felt a glow of admiration for Naomi at that time for her brave words, and down deep in her heart she knew that the gods which her people worshiped were false gods and not like the God whom the Hebrews worshiped. But now that she had gone back to her people once more and was away from the strong, uplifting influence of that godly woman, she had felt the old desire to enjoy the old life as she had formerly done, but somehow she could not.

"But I will, I will, I will," she exclaimed, as she made her final preparations and started forth with the merry group of friends who had come to accompany her to the place of the celebration. As they moved on they chatted and laughed gayly, and it was not long ere the old spirit of gaiety had completely possession of her, and she forgot all about the struggle she had had and the questions which had kept her in so unhappy a state since her return to the old home.

Thus the day sped swiftly on. The festivities were at their height, and the great throngs of people awaited the coming of the solemn procession of the priests, who in the presence of all the people were to make their offerings to the gods and invoke their blessings upon the people, following which the dances were to dance the sinuous, dreamy figures which were part of the religious ceremonies. Orpha, arrayed in her filmy, festal robes, had taken her place with the other dancers ready to play her part, when the time would come, as she had been wont to do in former years.

"Are you not glad that you are here and not in the land of Israel?" asked one of her companions standing next to her.

"Yes," answered Orpha enthusiastically, "and I wish Ruth were here to share in the festivities with us." "Foolish she was, indeed," was the reply of the other. "What can she find there but poverty and hardship? Have you had tidings from her since she went away?"

At the mention of the land of Israel, and the name of Ruth a stranger standing near had started and then listened eagerly to the conversation which followed, but so occupied were Orpha and her friends with their conversation that they did not note this. But suddenly they were aroused by an abrupt inquiry addressed to Orpha: "Did you know Ruth?" he asked. "Bring you word from her?" Orpha asked, eagerly. "Is she well? How fares she?" and she continued to pour out a rapid fire of questions, piling up her inquiries concerning Ruth.

The stranger lifted up his hand in helpless protest to stem the flood of questions, saying, as he did so: "Listen, for I have just come from Bethlehem and bring tidings of wonderful things which have come to pass. Call her no longer poor, unfortunate Ruth, for she has become the wife of one of the principal men of the city."

"What's that you say?" cried Orpha, incredulously, believing that her ears had misunderstood. And thus importuned the stranger went on to explain and to give further details of her sister-in-law's life since going to Bethlehem.

At this point the conversation was interrupted by the passing of the priests, mumbling their incantations, while the people shouted the names of their gods, crying: "Great are the gods of the Moabites. Where are there gods like unto them, and who can bestow blessing such as they give to their faithful children?"

"Who, indeed?" thought Orpha, bitterly, as her thoughts sped back to that day when she had stood in the roadway with Ruth and Naomi and had finally turned back and left the two to go on alone. Her gala attire seemed as though mocking her in her distress. She thought of the abhorrence which Naomi had had of the feast days of the Moabites. What would she think of her now in the midst of that gaiety? She knew that the God whom Naomi had worshiped and about whom she had spoken to her two daughters-in-law, was the true God. She might have had him for her God, but she had turned back. Thus harassed by the workings of her conscience, she turned and fled from the place, crying out as she went:

"It might have been, but now it is too late! Too late!"

## ON THE TRAIL OF THE AMERICAN MISSIONARY

By WILLIAM T. ELLIS

This Distinguished American Journalist is Traveling Around the World for the Purpose of Investigating the American Foreign Missionary from a Purely Disinterested, Secular and Non-Sectarian Standpoint. Illustrated with Drawings and from Photographs.

### Y. M. C. A. IN THE FIELD

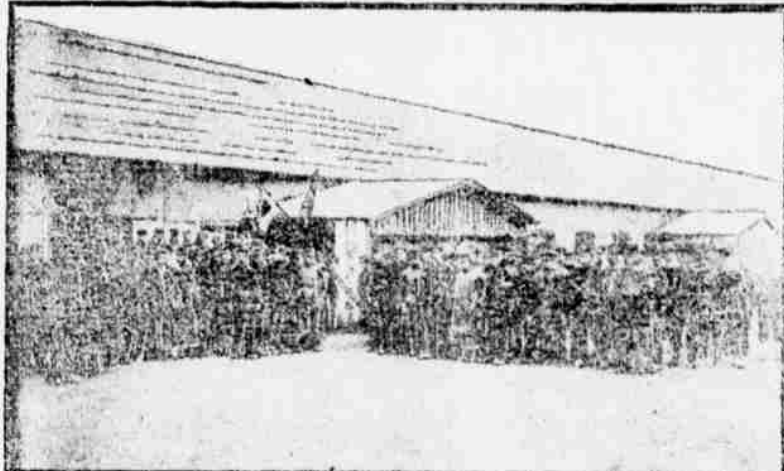
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Tokio, Japan.—"Before the war" is as much a stock phrase in Japan today as it ever was in the United States after the struggle of the sixties. The war has made all things new. Now Japan is a ship that has found herself. And what are mostly guesses on the part of the rest of the world concerning Japan's purposes and future are intensely interesting present problems with persons on the scene. The situation here is complex and rather bewildering, but there are certain unquestioned facts which stand out clearly as a result of the war.

One of the wonders wrought by this wonderful war takes rank as perhaps the most conspicuous achievement of its kind in religious history. For the conflict lately waged in Manchuria has been the means of winning the whole nation to friendliness for Christianity. This amounts to nothing less than a vast Christian conquest. It justifies the sanguine reports which missionaries sometimes send home, without any such ground as they may stand upon in the present case. Representatives of many denominations, from all parts of the empire, natives as well as foreigners, have assured me that practically the last vestige of active opposition to Christianity has gone from Japan, thanks to the work done in

that prompted the offer to the government at the outset of the war, by the national Y. M. C. A. of a work for the army similar to that among American and British soldiers.

All sorts of organizations and agencies and persons wanted to go to the front. Religious bodies were especially eager. But, like the war correspondents, they were kept waiting. The Y. M. C. A. among them. Indeed, it had been said that the opposition to Christianity in the army had been pushed to the very limit of treaty rights. While various self-esteeming gentlemen of the press were being deported for manifestations of their impatience, the association patiently waited and worked. Finally its day came. All other Christian enterprises were declared from the scene of warfare. But three representatives of the Association, two Japanese and one American, with their equipment, were started for Antung. During two weeks' detention at Chinkiang they spent their time in serving the garrison. So when the three secretaries resumed their journey it was with the cordial endorsement of the commandant at the latter place. At Antung the authorities gave the best located building in the city for the Y. M. C. A. workers, and soon the secretaries



Y. M. C. A. Headquarters During the War.

Manchuria by the Y. M. C. A., with contributions given at first in the main by interested Americans, but later, with equal generosity, by the Japanese themselves. Long ago religious liberty was officially granted; but it takes more than an imperial edict to alter the attitude of a people and their atmosphere, so to speak. Despite the exaggerated reports in the past of Japan's having been won to Christianity, it has remained true, until this war, that missionaries have encountered many definite obstacles, as well as a hostile spirit not infrequently displayed.

#### Emperor Strikes Blow at His Own Deity.

The most remarkable outcome of the work which is herein described, was the gift of the emperor of 10,000 yen (\$5,000) towards the army work of the Young Men's Christian Association. What this means the western world can scarcely comprehend. It has given "face" to the whole movement. All possible criticism has been stilled by it. The Young Men's Christian Association has been identified with the national life. Followed, as it was, by the emperor's gift of 5,000 yen to the Okayama orphanage, a Christian institution, with a pledge of 1,000 yen each year for five years, the impression made upon the Japanese mind has been profound. A man who keeps posted upon affairs at the capital, Rev. Dr. John H. De Forest, assures me that, so far as he can learn, the emperor has since made no gift to any Buddhist object.

The curious feature of this extraordinary episode is that it is like an idol's putting a lighted dynamite bomb under its own pedestal. At least that is the way it strikes a westerner. For the emperor of Japan is considered a deity by the vast majority of his subjects. His picture is worshiped in the schoolrooms. He is the most popular figure in the nation's pantheon. Yet here he indorses and supports an avowedly Christian movement, which, if successful, must overthrow all other worship than that of the Christian's God. Truly, among the innumerable anomalous conditions in modern Japan this is not the least anomalous.

#### Americans to the Front.

As is generally known, the Y. M. C. A. work in Japan was planted and is fostered by the international committee, having its headquarters in New York. With a skill which some older missionaries find it difficult to emulate, the American association even have kept themselves in the background and have put the work entirely in the control of the Japanese; yet here, and recognized by their native associates as real leaders in the work. The associations that exist in Tokio, Osaka, Nagasaki, Kioto and Kobe have American as well as native secretaries. It was American alertness

proved the worth of their work. Promptly, and with the most unusual cooperation on the part of officials, as shown by free transportation of men and supplies, granting privileges for mail and telegrams, details of soldiers for manual labor, etc., the Association work expanded until it has eleven bases established and reached even to the firing line. The status speedily attained by the workers is evident from the fact that it soon became an ordinary occurrence for commanders of regiments to salute the American secretaries as if they were superior officers.

#### The Religion of a Hair Cut.

The type of religion displayed was most practical: the approval of the Japanese was not accorded for any sentimental considerations. Simply because the Y. M. C. A. proved useful to the soldier it was welcomed and assisted. Thus, during the entire campaign, 3,285,000 pieces of stationery were distributed, but only 416,000 pieces of religious literature. In even more marked proportion 1,752 concerts were provided for the men, and only 613 religious meetings. Of course the entire project was avowedly Christian, but its faith was displayed by its works rather than by words. It was the religion of good deeds, and so even the most ignorant coolie in the ranks could comprehend it.

Recreation, diversion, accommodation and inspiration were the aims of the Y. M. C. A. rooms. Here a soldier could find a place to write home and free stationery. Every one of the three and a quarter million pieces of stationery, bearing the Christian name, as it did, became a silent evangelist for the Christian propaganda. Into the remotest corner of the empire it carried the news that Christians were brothering the man at the front. And, naturally, every letter written told of the comforts and pleasures provided by this Young Men's Christian Association. Could the most bigoted Buddhist, in the remotest rural region, cherish ill-will toward a religion that was so helpful to his son and his neighbors?

Bathhouse, tea-house, barber shop, music hall, library, tailor shop, writing room and lounging room were all combined in these Y. M. C. A. quarters. The men were supplied with innumerable games, including baseball (the American national game has become ubiquitous), archery, fencing and fishing tackle. This last enabled the men to vary their meager diet and at some places literally hundreds of men would be found lined up along the bank of a stream fishing for fun and a dinner. It takes little imagination to read into the following figures, just issued, a novel and far-reaching ministry that fairly stirred the nation, and called forth from every general in the field, and from the prime minister and minister of war, the strongest expressions of approval and gratitude. Three quarters of a

million different individual soldiers were touched by the work. About 1,566,000 soldiers entered the 11 different branches during the war, some men more than once, of course, which explains the enormous total. Eighty-eight thousand obtained buttons, soap, thread, patches, etc. Books were borrowed by 26,000 men, and 152,000 used the association's barber supplies. The laundry facilities of a single branch were employed by 18,000 soldiers. In addition, hundreds of visits were made by the workers to hospitals and barracks and camp at a distance from the association bases.

After the day's work was done, the secretaries generally had to stay up late at night putting the overworked hair-clippers into condition for the morrow. The wounded men's hair was cut by the secretaries themselves. A pathetic incident is related by Secretary Hibbard: "One day a man asked him with: 'Will you please wash my face?' I looked at him and saw that he certainly needed it, and that both arms were in slings, his hands having been shot away. He had not had a chance to wash his face for two weeks before he was wounded. So I started in. But soap and water had no effect on that accumulated dirt, so I finally had to scrape the man clean. Then I cut his matted, bloody hair, and when I got through the man was weeping for gratitude. He could not utter a word of thanks—and when the politeness of the Japanese deserts him, he is in a pretty bad way."

#### A New Feature of the Army.

All this work was done by a force of only 41 secretaries, the Americans who initiated and largely directed it being C. V. Hibbard, V. W. Helm, George Gleason and G. S. Phelps. There was an abundance of volunteer help on the part of the soldiers, and by military details officially appointed. The officers themselves freely cooperated. In the matter of outdoor sports and indoor entertainments the soldiers gave unlimited assistance. But the best friend of the secretaries was the graphophone, of which the men seemed never to tire. Now one hears these machines at work day and night all over Japan.

Since the return of the army, permanent Y. M. C. A. headquarters have been established, by the urgent request of the army officers, at Laoyang and at Port Arthur. The governor-general of Manchuria peninsula made a personal subscription of a thousand yen for the continuance of the work. At Port Arthur the military officials turned over to the association and agreed to keep in repair, a beautiful Russian cathedral to be used as Y. M. C. A. headquarters. The most active Y. M. C. A. in the world was probably at Dalgai; as many as 10,000 soldiers passed within its portals in a single day. When the main army was returning home it ministered to more than half a million men. One of the Japanese secretaries of the association has gone into rescue work at Dalgai, for, while the army was kept absolutely free from these camp followers during hostilities, a flood of disolute women, recruited under the most pitiable circumstances, has since poured into Manchuria.

#### Touching the Nation Through the Army.

The part that the army has played in the modern religious history of Japan is more considerable than would at first sight appear. During the war the Christians were foremost in visiting hospitals, meeting soldier trains with refreshments and food, and in preparing "comfort bags," a compact assortment of useful articles, including a copy of the gospels. Some 180,000 portions of Scripture were distributed among the soldiers. A small book of "Comfort Songs for Soldiers" was compiled and distributed freely by the missionaries, and it was quite common to hear crowds of men lustily singing these Christian hymns. Not a few of the missionaries had nursing during the war, and in the care of soldiers' families and orphans they have been conspicuous.

The value of this work as an adjunct to the strictly military preparations were seen at Dalgai, where practically the whole army of the Yalu passed through the Y. M. C. A. rooms. After the fall of Port Arthur the soldiers expected to go home, at least for a rest. They had endured hardships of which the world has some knowledge. Of the minor deprivations the world knows nothing; one of these was the inability to get through the censor more than one letter every month or two. Even then the paper and envelope cost five cents, and the soldiers' pay for a day was only three cents. After the fortress surrendered the soldiers thought these troubles were over. Instead, they were marched across the ice, at a temperature all ways below freezing, to augment the army at Mukden. En route this dispirited army touched the Y. M. C. A. It warmed itself, drank its fill of hot tea, heard the old home songs on the graphophone, and wrote letters, sometimes 25,000 a day. This revived the spirits of the men to a degree almost inconceivable. They entered with grumbling; they left with songs, assured that such a country which made possible such an institution as this had not forgotten them.

The consequence of all this self-effacing, assiduous and effective ministry to the nation's soldiers has been to establish Christianity on new and more favorable basis throughout Japan; and should this soon come to pass, as is predicted, a national movement toward Christianity, this army work will have been largely responsible for it.

Some people are so poor that they can afford to pay an honest tax rate on everything they possess

### WHAT MADE HIM DOUBTFUL.

Size of Commuter's Hat Caused Acquaintance to Worry.

A commuters on the D. L. & W. remarked to a friend the other morning, as they came into the city:

"Hawkins, of Stamford, is going to move into that new house next door to me. I know him very slightly, and I understand that you know him pretty well."

"Yes, I have known him for upward of 20 years."

"Well, what kind of a fellow is he, anyhow?" asked the commuter.

"A first-rate fellow, and in every way desirable. Why?"

"I just wanted to know, because I could never quite make up my mind about him, he wears such a small hat."—Philadelphia Ledger.

### How's This?

We offer One Hundred Dollars Reward for any case of Catarrh that cannot be cured by Hall's Catarrh Cure.

F. J. CHENEY & CO., Toledo, O. We, the undersigned, have known F. J. Cheney for the last 15 years, and believe him perfectly honorable in all business transactions and financially able to carry out any obligations made by him.

Wholesale Druggists, Toledo, O. Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally, acting directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. Testimonials sent free. Price 75 cents per bottle. Sold by all Druggists. Take Hall's Family Pills for constipation.

### Worth Observing.

In a certain preparatory school in Washington an instructor one day made the statement that "every year a sheet of water 14 feet thick is raised to the clouds from the sea."

"At what time of the year does that occur, professor?" asked a freshman. "It must be a sight worth going a long way to see."—Harper's.

The extraordinary popularity of fine white goods this summer makes the choice of Starch a matter of great importance. Defiance Starch, being free from all injurious chemicals, is the only one which is safe to use on fine fabrics. Its great strength as a stiffener makes half the usual quantity of Starch necessary, with the result of perfect finish, equal to that when the goods were new.

### Peat as Inexpensive Fuel.

Leut. H. Ekelund, of Jonkoping, Sweden, claims to have made an important invention in fuel saving. According to his method, peat is used in the shape of a powder and is said to give sufficient heat to use coal in a furnace without the use of coal.

Spring always brings into crowded favor Nature's blood purifier, Goodol Tea. It is made wholly of clean, sweet herbs. It purifies the blood, cleanses the system, clears the complexion, eradicates disease and promotes Good Health. For young and old.

### Then She Takes the Lines.

The young girl's air was pensive. "To-morrow," she said, "Reginald will conduct me to the altar. There—? Smiling, she lighted another cigarette. "—his leadership will end."

FITS, St. Vitus Dance and all Nervous Diseases permanently cured by Dr. Kline's Great Nerve Restorer. Send for Free 2400 trial bottle and treatise. Dr. R. H. Kline, Ltd., 931 Arch St., Philadelphia, Pa.

The spring poet usually writes his spring poems by the side of as good a fire as he can afford.

Lewis' Single Binder Cigar has a rich taste. Your dealer or Lewis' Factory, Peoria, Ill.

Method will teach you to win time.—Goethe.

## STOMACH ON STRIKE

SUCCESSFUL TONIC TREATMENT FOR INDIGESTION.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills Cured This Woman and Have Cured Many Hundreds of Other Cases of Common Ailments.

Loss of appetite, coated tongue, bad taste in the mouth, heavy dull headache and a dull, sluggish feeling—these are the symptoms of stomach trouble. They indicate that the stomach is on a strike; that it is no longer furnishing to the blood the full quota of nourishment that the body demands, hence every organ suffers.

There are two methods of treatment, the old one by which the stomach is humored by the use of predigested foods and artificial ferments, and the new one by which the stomach is toned up to do the work which nature intended of it. A recent cure by the tonic treatment is that of Mrs. Mary Stackpole, of 81 Liberty street, Lowell, Mass. She says: "I suffered constantly for years from stomach troubles and terrible backaches and was confined to my bed the greater part of three years. I was under the care of our family physician most of the time, but did not seem to get better."

"I was completely run-down and was not able to do my work about the house. My blood was impure and my complexion pale. I suffered from flashes of heat, followed suddenly by chills. I had awful headaches, which lasted from three to four days. I could get but little rest at night, as my sleep was broken and fitful. As a result I lost several pounds in weight and became very nervous."

"I was in a wretched condition when I heard about Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I started to take the pills at once and began to gain in weight and health. I was encouraged by this to keep on until I was cured. My friends and neighbors often remark what a changed woman I am and I owe it all to Dr. Williams' Pink Pills."

These wonderful pills are useful in a wide range of diseases such as anemia, rheumatism, sciatica, neuralgia, nervous headaches, and even locomotor ataxia and partial paralysis.

The great value of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills lies in the fact that they actually make new blood and this carries health and strength to every portion of the body. The stomach is toned up, the nerves are strengthened, every organ is stimulated to do its work.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are sold by all druggists, or sent, postpaid, on receipt of price, 50 cents per box, six boxes for \$2.50, by the Dr. Williams Medicine Company, Schenectady, N. Y.